

# AIR BRIDGE

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► 927th Air Refueling Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich.

► August 2006



[www.927ARW.afrc.af.mil](http://www.927ARW.afrc.af.mil)



JOHN SWANSON, 127TH WG MULTIMEDIA SERVICES

*Vice President Dick Cheney mingles with the crowd following a troop rally July 10 at Selfridge ANG Base. He thanked many for their dedication and patriotism, and granted autographs to supporters and well-wishers.*

## Vice President visits Selfridge

by **Thomas Schmidt**  
Editor

**V**ice President Dick Cheney attended a rally here July 10 thanking "Citizen-Airmen" for their dedication and encouraging them to continue the fight against terrorism.

Military people from all branches of the armed

services at Selfridge, along with a throng of family members, military retirees and civilian employees, filled the hangar to near capacity to catch a glimpse of the vice president. Nearly 1,000 people greeted the vice president in his first historic visit to the base.

"I have immense respect for Citizen-Airmen, and you

should be proud of the tremendous difference you make in our country," the vice president told the enthusiastic crowd.

"I am very grateful to the Selfridge units for the sacrifices that have been made in the Global War on Terror, and our country is fortunate to have you on our side. The Global War on

Terror is a battle for future civilization and one which we will win."

The rally opened with presentation of colors by the Selfridge Joint Honor Guard, and the U.S. Air Force Band of Flight from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base,

see, *Vice President visits*, page 2

► **VIEW FROM THE TOP**

**AIR FORCE OUTSTANDING UNIT AWARD  
TO  
927<sup>TH</sup> AIR REFUELING WING**

*The 927<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, distinguished itself by exceptionally meritorious service from 1 September 2003 to 31 August 2005. During this period, the 927<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing effectively organized, equipped and trained personnel to provide air refueling support to fighter, bomber and airlift aircraft as well as contributing associated expeditionary combat support services across a wide spectrum of missions. In the past two years, the Wing successfully and ahead of schedule, converted to the KC-135R model aircraft, diligently prepared for and succeeded in passing eight major inspections, including lead wing responsibilities for an Air Mobility Command Expeditionary Operational Readiness Inspection involving 28 separate wings from Active, Guard, and Reserve components and aggressively supported Operations JOINT FORGE, NOBLE EAGLE, IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM. Completing the aircraft conversion ahead of schedule allowed the Wing to assist other wings to complete their conversions on time and enabled training to continue unimpeded. In preparation for the inspections, the Wing taking the fight to the enemy, the 927<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing wholeheartedly and successfully supported every assigned mission in the Global War on Terrorism. The distinctive accomplishments of the members of the 927<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling wing reflect great credit upon themselves and the United States Air Force.*

“This award merely tells others what we already know about ourselves, we are the premier air refueling wing in the Air Force. From A to Z we have the most dedicated, trained and professional airmen anywhere in the Air Force. The recognition is well deserved and long overdue!”

- Chief Master Sgt. Clifford Whitenburg  
Command Chief Master Sergeant

“This award does not come easily. What a testament to the professionalism and spirit of excellence that is . . . the 927th Air Refueling Wing. Be proud of all of your accomplishments. The sense of community that exists here at the 927th is very special. It is an honor to serve with each of you.”

- Col. Gary Beebe  
Commander

## **Vice President visits** *(continued)*

Ohio, performed patriotic music.

Team Selfridge set the stage for the vice president's arrival with aircraft static displays. Selfridge set out a KC-135R Stratotanker from Air Force Reserve Command's 927th Air Refueling Wing. The Michigan Air National Guard displayed F-16 Fighting Falcons and C-130 Hercules transporters. The Coast Guard had on hand one of its HH-65C Dolphin helicopters.

In addition to thanking service members and their families, Mr. Cheney praised employers for their sacrifices in the war on terror.

“The support of employers is greatly appreciated during the deployment of our troops,” he said.

Master Sgt. Michael Weir, 63<sup>RD</sup> Air Refueling Squadron, said it was gracious of the vice president to take time to thank the people of Selfridge.

“His speech was full of words of encouragement and emphasized the country's efforts in the GWOT,” said Sergeant Weir.

Staff Sgt. Stephanie Palembas, 927th Operations Support Flight, said she was inspired by the vice president's remarks.

“His words seemed to come from the heart, and I felt a deep sense of loyalty and camaraderie as he spoke,” she said. “Our leaders literally

have the weight of the world on their shoulders, and he gives the impression that they truly care about each and every military member.”

With pomp and circumstance completed, Mr. Cheney spent a few minutes personally greeting well-wishers and signing autographs as he mingled with the crowd.

► **RECOGNITION**

# WWII airmen honored



JOHN SWANSON, 127TH WG MULTIMEDIA SERVICES

*Six Tuskegee Airmen admire the engraved citation recognizing their contributions to our country and the sacrifices they made. The citation will be placed on public display in the new visitor's welcome center when it opens later this year.*

**by Thomas Schmidt**  
Editor

More than 60 years has passed since Roscoe C. Brown, Jr., was put on a train in the middle of the night along with nearly 200 other African-American airmen assigned to Selfridge Air Field for training.

Racial problems had risen when some black officers attempted to enter the whites-only Lufberry Hall officer's club. To avoid further problems the airmen were sent by train to South Carolina where they completed their training and eventually became the last class of black Airmen to train at Selfridge—later becoming known as Tuskegee Airmen.

During a Selfridge base community council luncheon July 18, now-retired Capt. Brown and five other Tuskegee Airmen returned to Selfridge to attend a ceremony honoring their sacrifices and

to recognize their efforts to overcome discrimination.

During the luncheon in the recently completed joint dining facility, the Tuskegee Airmen were awarded a plaque for their accomplishments. It will be on public display in the visitor's center at the main gate when the facility is completed later this year.

The Tuskegee Airmen originated

as a pursuit squadron based in Tuskegee, Ala., in 1941. They were involved in an Army Air Corps program to train African-American men to fly and maintain combat aircraft, a program known as the "Tuskegee Experiment." Pilots, navigators, bombardiers, maintenance personnel, instructors and support staff were included. Advanced gunnery training was completed by 330 pilots at Selfridge from 1942 to 1944. These pilots represented 75 percent of the 450 pilots who saw combat in the European theater during World War II.

While never losing a bomber to enemy fire, and dealing with segregation, they were considered among the best fighter pilots the Army Air Corps had to offer.

President Bush has signed a resolution awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen. The award ceremony will be held at the nation's Capitol this fall.

"I was just a young man doing what I was supposed to do for my country," said Lt. Col. Lee Archer, 85, of New York, one of the airmen visiting Selfridge. He was a certified fighter ace during the war, downing five Luftwaffe aircraft.

Maj. Gen. Lucius Theus, one of only three Tuskegee Airmen to attain the general officer rank, said, "The Tuskegee Airmen broke many barriers. They broke trail, they made it possible for people of different races, creeds and so forth to have the opportunity to demonstrate that they could and would perform well."

"They are truly pioneers in aviation and cultural change," said Colonel Gary Beebe, 927<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing commander.



► **STREET TALK****What is your impression of the new dining facility?**

**Tech. Sgt. Rich Huntley**  
927th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

I like it. "Thumbs up!" It's closer to hangar seven. It's a cleaner facility. The food seems to taste better with the new ambiance and I have a more comfortable chair."

"The building is too expensive, the other building was fine. The food is still the same. There are not enough vegetarian options."



**Airman First Class Anna Wyant**  
29th Aerial Port Flight



**Senior Airman Melisa Lucio**  
927th Logistics Readiness Squadron

"I like the new place, it's bright. I will definitely eat here more often."

"I like it, it's big and spacious. I feel like I'm back in college at the cafeteria. The line seemed to go faster, or maybe the new building made the wait more enjoyable."



**Senior Airman Leah Alphin**  
927th Communications Flight

**ASK THE CHIEF**

**Chief Master Sgt. Clifford Whitenburg**  
Command Chief Master Sergeant

Frequently, questions are asked of me regarding a matter near and dear to most of us. The subject being Base Realignment and Closure, or more commonly called BRAC.

I will reply in this format to concerns and questions addressed to me that may be of interest to a majority of the wing. Please send your inquiries to me at: [clifford.whitenburg@selfridge.af.mil](mailto:clifford.whitenburg@selfridge.af.mil).

**Q:** Colonel Beebe mentioned the possibility of IDT travel to MacDill AFB once we make the transfer. Is this the same as a rotational shuttle? If not, please explain.

**A:** Good question. No, the two travel

issues are completely different.

Currently, the REI office, a full-time group of staffers that represent Reserve matters to Congress, is working on nine initiatives that are BRAC related. One of these is to have travel for IDT (Inactive Duty Training) paid by the government for traditional reservists who are affected by BRAC to travel to their new location for drill weekends.

The proposal asks for a two year funding stream, with a possible third year, to cover the costs of commercial airline travel to MacDill, for example. Since issues, such as paid IDT travel, must be enacted and funded by Congress, it is incumbent upon the member(s) to let their congressional representatives know if they want them to support this and other issues that affect them. Addresses for your elected representatives are included

in the Wing Bulletin every month.

The other travel issue is separate from paid IDT travel and is meant to provide for travel on military aircraft that would come to

Selfridge once a month. If put in place, the shuttle would pick you up on Friday evenings and return to SANG Sunday evening of a drill weekend. This is being discussed as a viable option to supplement, complement, or replace the need for commercial air travel for UTAs. But, no firm plans have been set in concrete.



## ► NEWS

# Airmen handle missions big and small in Afghanistan

by Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais Jr.  
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

**BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan (AFPN)** - Tech. Sgt. William Long, 29<sup>th</sup> Aerial Port Flight at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., likes a challenge, but a couple weeks ago, one challenge seemed insurmountable.

Air Force officials notified an Airman deployed to a remote forward operating base that his wife was gravely ill. The Air Force placed him on emergency leave, and then tried to figure a way to get him from the Afghan frontier to the United States.

As a controller in the air terminal operations center here, Sergeant Long decided to tackle the problem. Sergeant Long found an Army helicopter that would transport the Airman from the forward operating base to Kabul. Then, he put the Airman on a convoy from Kabul to here — where Sergeant Long ran into another problem. A Russian cargo plane had caught fire on the runway, closing the runway for a day.

Because C-130 Hercules specialize in short take-offs and landings, Sergeant Long found a C-130 aircrew willing to fly the desperate Airman to Kuwait, where he caught a rotator flight to Atlanta, where he met his family.

"There were no flights leaving here and (Sergeant) Long found a way to get this guy home," said 1st Lt. John Hoffmann, the aerial port's operations officer. "The guys are doing some amazing things — not just the minimum. They're giving it their all."

In the ATOC nerve center, Sergeant Long, another controller and a duty officer track everything from pallets to people. Information

assaults them from many different sources.

If it rings, they answer it.

If it pops up on the computer screen through one of the three software programs, they study it.

If it squawks over the radio, they listen.

If someone in the command post yells information through their window, they yell a reply.

If a person walks in with a question, that person walks out with an answer.

"It helps if we're able to multi-task," Sergeant Long said.

Master Sgt. Deidre McClain, a duty officer deployed here from Robins Air Force Base, Ga., said, "Our main duty is to make sure everything comes in on time and leaves on time."

Sergeant McClain is used to the maddening infusion of information. She remembers one day when five cargo aircraft landed at the same time. Based on the people and equipment at Bagram, the maximum number of aircraft they can unload at one time is three. Then, on some days, they feel lucky to get five aircraft in five hours.

However, because Bagram Air Base is the hub for freight and passenger movement for Operation Enduring Freedom throughout Afghanistan, there are very few relaxing days.

In June, the 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron moved 5,812 tons of cargo, 4.5 tons of mail and 12,506 passengers. If the Air Force used only C-17 Globemaster IIIs and loaded them to their maximum payload of 85 tons or 102 passengers per aircraft, the C-17s would be lined up end to end for 6.5 miles to equal the amount of cargo and people pushed through here in June.

It takes 16 Airmen working around the clock in 12-hour shifts to move that much equipment and people. One aircraft may be loaded with toilet tissue and office supplies, while the one next to it could have congressmen or senators on it. One will need a K-loader, while the other a stair truck.

The ATOC staff's biggest fear is to cause delays. So far, it has successfully dodged them. As of July 6, the staff had gone 33 days without an aerial port-induced delay. There are delays in takeoffs, but they are caused for other reasons, like mechanical problems, air-crew troubles, operations, planning or weather. The ATOC team has reduced aerial-port delays by 70 percent, according to Master Sgt. John Oyster, NCO in charge of air traffic control.

The team has also saved the Air Force thousands of dollars by recovering equipment like chains, nets and pallets. In salvaging 117 pallets, Sergeant Oyster and his team saved the Air Force \$269,000. They found areas on base where pallets were being used as floors for latrines and showers, as a pad for a water tank and flooring for a vehicle maintenance tent.

Also, by finding room where they could on cargo aircraft, they had hundreds of wall lockers flown to Kandahar, saving the Air Force more than \$11,000 in trucking costs.

But, it's not saving the Air Force money that makes them happy. For Sergeant Long, it's the satisfaction he gains from helping other Airmen. Figuring a way to reunite an Airman with his ill wife is something Sergeant Long will proudly remember for the rest of his life.

"In fact, it made everyone in the unit feel good," he said.

## ► NEWS

## Rules of engagement for political activities

Political freedom is something the military has defended since the founding of the United States.

While free to participate in the political process, there are rules military members need to know.

The November 2006 elections are fast approaching and will decide 435 House of Representatives seats, 33 of the 100 Senate seats and 36 state governors. Numerous

state and local elections will also be held across the country.

Political activity rules may be found in Air Force Instruction 51-902, *Political Activities by Members of the U.S. Air Force*. Violators of the rules can be punished under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Examples of prohibited activities include attending a political event in uniform, using

official authority to interfere with an election and affect its course or outcome, and using contemptuous words against officials in public office. Military members are allowed to attend political events in civilian clothes but only as a spectator. Speaking publicly at these events is not allowed in or out of uniform. These rules are not in place to restrict a military member's political freedoms.

"Obviously we want people to vote and express their opinions," said Maj. Frank Minogue, chief of civil law for Air Education and Training Command at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. "People are encouraged to participate in the political process, just not as representatives of the Air Force." (*Air Force Print News*)

## F-14A "Tomcat" arrives at Selfridge



Flown by the "Black Aces" of U.S. Navy Fighter Squadron 41 from the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, the aircraft is a welcomed addition to the Selfridge Air Museum where

it joined 27 other aircraft already on display.

Once used as a maintenance trainer for Navy Reservists at Selfridge, it became excess property and is on loan from the National

Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, FL.

Nearly \$8,000.00 is being spent by the air museum for a contractor to remove the engines and both its armament and ejection systems made safe before it is put on display.

Cosmetic alterations, such as painting and sealing the openings against weather and insect intrusion, are planned.

Air Museum information is available by visiting its website

— [www.selfridgeairmuseum.org](http://www.selfridgeairmuseum.org) or by telephone — 586-307-5035

### SELFTRIDGE MILITARY AIR PARK AND MUSEUM

Hours of operation

Open until the end of October

Saturday and Sunday  
Noon - 4:30 p.m.

Open by appointment for groups

Telephone: 586-307-6768



## AIR BRIDGE

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Col. Gary E. Beebe

927th Air Refueling Wing Commander

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► **BRAC NEWS****939th ARW begins drawdown**

by Maj. James R. Wilson  
939th ARW Wing Public Affairs

The first KC-135R Stratotanker aircraft from the 939th Air Refueling Wing departed Portland July 14, 2006 with additional tankers from Oregon soon to follow. The aircraft's departure marks beginning of a change in mission for this Air Force Reserve unit.

Under the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure, all eight of the refueling aircraft and 900 authorized positions will depart Oregon in order to realign the 939th's mission. Members and equipment assigned to the operations and maintenance units will leave by Sept. 30, 2007. The executive staff and the mission support group will remain until Sept. 30, 2010.

"Members of the 939th Air Refueling Wing have contributed to America's defense in ways many of us never imagined when the mission changed to air refueling three years ago," said Col. William N. Flanigan, 939th Air Refueling Wing commander. "There were many Herculean efforts that made a positive impact on the Air Force mission. We can and should be very proud of that."

"Having said that, this is obviously a trying time for many people in the 939th," Colonel Flanigan said. "There are a number of emotions involved, but I do feel ultimately our Reservists will see this time as the precursor to new opportunities and reap

the rewards that the changes will offer them."

The 939th's lineage will live on, although it will take a different shape, in the future. Officials expect to establish 75 full-time and 400 traditional reservist authorizations to support the Reserve's growing space program by October 2010. The tentative plan is for the 939th's new mission to be located at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

"The story of the 939th will continue here at Oregon and later as part of the Air Force Space Command," 939th Command Chief Master Sergeant Michael Steinbach said. "This change, while substantial, cannot affect what the 939th represents—strength, honor and courage. Those values are at the very core of the 939th."

"I'm proud to say, the heartbeat of this wing is as strong today as it was 40 years ago," Chief Steinbach said. "Its pulse will continue well into the future as it beats within each of us."

The Air Force Reserve will maintain a presence in Portland after the flying mission is gone. Along with the 939th's executive staff and mission support group, Portland International Airport remains home to the 304th Rescue Squadron. The 304th RQS, an organization of approximately 100 members, performs both civil and combat rescue operations by air, land and sea.

**440th AW set to move**

The timeline for the permanent transfer of the 440th Airlift Wing to Pope AFB, NC, and the closure of General Mitchell International Airport Air Reserve Station has been released. The 440th AW will be a North Carolina Air Force Reserve unit by May 2007 and the Air Reserve Station will close by February 2008. These moves are two of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission decisions that became law in November.

The first official transfers of wing personnel will be in early August when 13 members set up operations at Pope as Det. 1, 440th AW.

The movement plan calls for the main body of the wing (about 200 full-time flying operations and aircraft maintenance specialists) to be at Pope AFB by May 1. The command element will transfer to Pope between May and July of 2007.

All eight of the unit's C-130 Hercules transport planes will be moved during August 2007. They should all be in place by Sept. 1, 2007.

Unit training weekends for the transplanted 440th will begin in North Carolina in May. Local training weekends will continue to be held at General Mitchell Air Reserve Station through September 2007. The only parts of the 440th left in Milwaukee by October 2007 will be those engaged in closing the station. (AFRC News Service)

► **IN BRIEF****KC-135 celebrates 50 years of flying**

The KC-135 Stratotanker has a long and storied history throughout the annals of the Air Force. Its versatility is unsurpassed; having the ability to refuel aircraft during flight while modified versions can serve as flying command posts, transports, electronic reconnaissance and photo-mapping crafts.

Join us at Tinker AFB, OK for the KC-135's 50th Anniversary, 8-9 September 2006 as we celebrate 50 remarkable years of service.

For more information including online event and hotel registration, please visit [www.kc135.org](http://www.kc135.org).

Artist and fellow "Boomer" Darby Perrin was commissioned specifically for this special 50th Anniversary. You may view and order his limited edition museum quality print at the website Commemorative coins may be purchased online as well.

Individuals may also share their interesting KC-135 stories on the website.

The KC-135 50th Anniversary is proudly sponsored by the Tinker Heritage Association and the Air Force Association's Gerrity Chapter. Proceeds will benefit the AFA Aerospace Education Foundation.

## ► PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

### Promotions

To Staff Sergeant

Eric D. Bradley, 927th AMXS

Steven M. Grady, 927th ARW

### Retirements

Lt. Col. Russell Ameter, 927th AMDF

Master Sgt. Richard Crabtree, 29th APF

## Here is what's happening around the wing

**Family Day**  
**Sunday, Aug. 20**  
**9 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

\$1.00 for civilians, officers and guests

Metropolitan Beach  
\$4.00 park entry fee per vehicle

car & motorcycle show  
children's games  
Fit-to-Fight Challenge  
golf tournament, horseshoes,  
volleyball, tug-o-war  
door prizes & giveaways  
food & beverages

**927th Air Refueling Wing**  
**Military Ball**  
**Sept. 23**

Honoring 927th ARW Retirees

Andiamo Italia Restaurant  
7096 E. 14 Mile Road  
Warren, Mich.  
Cocktails - 6 p.m.  
Dinner - 7 p.m.

Tickets available from first sergeants

## BIG PICTURE



### August

19-20 Unit Training Assembly  
20 - Family Day

### September

23-24 Unit Training Assembly

### October

14-15 Unit Training Assembly

### November

4-5 Unit Training Assembly

### December

2-3 Unit Training Assembly

### January

6-7 Unit Training Assembly

### Finally . . .



The Air Bridge is published for reservists like A1C Kaiesha Rivers, 927th Services Flight.

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